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What To Do When Life Happens...

There are times when we don't create much of our own reality. Life happens. Too often, it seems like life events pile up, rather than spread themselves evenly throughout our allotted years. Life events are major things like: birth, death, marriage, divorce, illness and everything in between. Then nature throws us curve balls like windstorms, droughts and earthquakes and our society of "We the People" presents us with new challenges such as worldwide economic depression. Sometimes the first words out of my mouth in the morning long to be "Why me?" I daydream about that nebulous future when my life will be smooth and joyous. Yeah, right. Meanwhile, Life happens.

What is it about me that wants to feel

superior to reality? From Eckhardt Tolle, I learn that my need to feel superior to reality is the opposite of acceptance. Tolle uses the marvelous example of the traffic jam. I'm stuck in the middle of the rush hour jam. I find myself angry, why? Because in my mind, the traffic jam is "wrong." It *shouldn't be*. But *it is*, and that's my reality, and all my anger and frustration won't change it one iota. But, there is life after the traffic jam, and if I accept that the traffic situation is my present reality, I need expend no psychic energy (stress) to experience it patiently. Life happens.

So, the key is letting go. Let go of the anger, let go of the frustration, and most importantly, let go of pushing against the idea that the world is doing things *TO* me.



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The sooner I let go and accept the reality of *what is*, the sooner I can choose how I will deal with it accountably.

MISERY IS OPTIONAL

I find that I can only be fully accountable for the way that I experience the world if I accept the idea that "*What is, is.*" If I don't accept *what is*, my resistance stands in the way of my choice. In fact, it may sometimes be that I hang out in resistance because I don't want to be accountable for my choices. Hmmmmm...life is going to happen anyway. So, it turns out that misery is optional.

LIFE GETS EASIER

When I practice 1) Becoming aware of what I resist, 2) Accepting what is, and 3) Moving immediately into how best to handle it constructively, I notice that life gets easier. Of course I still notice the idiot who cuts in front of me going 80 on the freeway. And, if I let that upset me, then I have just turned over my power to that poor individual who is much more likely to end up wrapped around a telephone pole than I am. I could feel powerless over the all the speeding idiots and other negative events that happen in my life, but I would then be allowing them to be in charge. The greatest gift I can give myself is to fully exercise my power to choose how I experience and react to each event that happens around me. When life happens, I

can choose how I will experience it.

I've had some life piling up so far in 2009, and the experience has given me a number of new opportunities to test my belief about misery being optional. There have been times when acceptance has been more difficult than usual, especially when that old multiplier effect is at work. And, in retrospect, I cherish my ability to accept and be accountable for my experiences of life events. This is what enables me to stay totally present in the midst of chaos or sadness. Being able to first accept and then be accountable for *what is*, I find my way through and beyond with minimal wear and tear, and full participation. It's good that life happens. How boring the alternative must be.

THE CHOICE IS YOURS

So, what is the message I offer my faithful readers? Choice, my friends, is always yours to make, as soon as you make the shift to accept *what is*. As in the stages of grief (anger, denial, negotiation, acceptance,) the sooner we end up at acceptance, the sooner we can move on with our life happenings.

Whether you're feeling the economic pain, mourning the loss of a loved one, or simply stuck in traffic, the mechanism is the same. Accept your reality and choose your reaction. Enjoy the power of accountability for your experience of life. Life happens, and isn't it wonderful? ▲

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- 2) Accepting what is, and
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